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100 Years of Gas Service in
Chicago, 1850-1950

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100 Years of GAS SERVICE in Chicago

1850



1950

THE PEOPLES GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY

122 South Michigan Avenue • Chicago 3, Illinois

“The Gas House Gang”

IN EVERYDAY AMERICAN LANGUAGE, “gas house gang” is a term of praise. It has been applied, for example, to big league baseball teams who play hard and win championships.

Its original meaning—and its real meaning today—describes workers whose job it is to make and send out gas, to keep gas service going in all weather, fair or foul. From the very first, back in 1850, and from then on, the rigors of the job and their own great spirit have made the “gas house gang” a determined, effective group.

The traditional tenacity of this public servant inspired the writing of a verse called “The Gas House Terrier,” a few lines of which follow:

He was a grimy Terrier from the gas house “down beyant.”

Of chemistry and algebra his knowledge true was scant;

But he’d a horny fist and an honest face and the grit of
a brindled pup.

He didn’t go much on photometry, but *he kept his holder up.*

Today the term “gas house gang” may well be applied to the entire Peoples Gas “family.” With the same spirit as the gas workers of the past, these present-day people—now more than 4500 strong—not only meet but welcome their obligations of public service. They are today’s “Keepers of the Flame.”

[SEE INSIDE BACK COVER]



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111 Volume 11
Sunday

100 YEARS

OF GAS SERVICE IN CHICAGO

1850-1950

GAS SERVICE first came to Chicago on September 4, 1850. In observance of the Centennial of Gas in Chicago, we have prepared this booklet, which sketches briefly the development of gas service in this city, its growth from small beginnings to its present scope and size.

Having reached the 100-year mark, we look forward to the second century with enthusiasm and confidence; for never has there been a future to look forward to so rich in opportunity for still more complete service—in more forms—to more people.



In celebration of this Hundredth Birthday, Peoples Gas in cooperation with the Museum of Science and Industry has presented to the people of Chicago a permanent exhibit at the Museum that tells THE STORY OF FLAME GAS. It is described on pages 30, 31 and 32 of this booklet. The exhibit is an entertaining and educational show for people of all ages. You and your family will want to see it and you are cordially invited to do so.

THE PEOPLES GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY

Highlights in a Century of Gas Service



Enter the Lamplighter



The Gaslight Era



He Kept the Gas Goin'



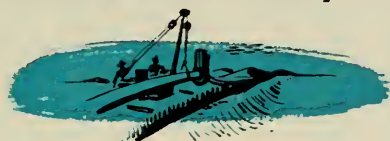
"Cookin' with Gas" Begins



13 Companies Become One



Gas Takes a Factory Job



It's a "Natural"



Everybody Wants More Gas!



Third Pipeline Under Way



Today's Plans for the Future

Enter the Lamplighter



CHICAGO IN 1850 was a rough and ready frontier town, entirely lacking in what were considered ordinary comforts in cities farther east. But it was already starting to “burst at the seams” with a phenomenal growth. Its 30,000 population of that year was to grow to 109,000 by 1860.

Newspapers announced that Clark Street was being planked (an early form of paving) and hoped that this would take the city out of “the mud and deeps profound.” A few years later the city fathers were raising the street levels. The downtown Chicago as we know it today is several feet higher than the original.

Lights were dim. Ads in the *Journal* during September 1850 offered: LAMP OILS, CANDLES, &c: *Winter Sperm Oil, Whale do.: Sperm Candles, Stearine do.* Perhaps the well-to-do burned wax candles on special occasions, but it looks as if most people cleaned lamps, went around their homes in semi-darkness, and were hardened to the odor of burning whale-oil.

Anyway, September 4, 1850, brought crowds into the streets. Word had gone out that gas lights were going to be turned on for the first time.

The lamplighter must have felt himself an important figure that first night. There was doubtless cheering when the thirty-six lamps came on in the City Hall, and in the homes and stores of the “125 other customers.” But the uproar must have hit its climax when the ninety-nine street lamps in and near Lake Street were all alight.

A few days later, the *Gem of the Prairie*, weekly edition of *The Chicago Tribune*, said, “At about two o’clock p.m., the gas pipes were filled and brilliant torches flamed on both sides of the street as far as the eye could see . . . The burners in Reed & Co., and in Keen’s were lighted about the same time, presenting a bright golden flame . . . In the evening the lamps were again lighted, and for the first time in the history of Chicago, several of the streets were lighted in regular



Citizens view gas-lighted windows of store at Wabash and Lake Streets, where goods on display included equipment for men bound for California gold fields.

city style. Hereafter she will not 'hide her light under a bushel.' ”

Back of the scenes there must well have been the usual anxiety and hard work that go with the starting of a new project. The new gas plant at Monroe and Market was manned by newcomers because Chicago was too young a city to have “native sons” on whom to call.

There were bristly-mustached sons of Scotland who brought their understanding of steam engines to the job of gas making. There were dozens of brawny Irish immigrants, too. Theirs was the job of putting gas mains into the streets and connecting them into the homes and businesses. More important, they took over the gas ovens. These strong-backed sons of Erin shoveled in the coal used to make the gas. To them goes the credit for establishing the tradition of “keeping the holders up.”

As years went on most of them continued to live in the shadows of the gas holders (“tanks” to the layman). If they saw the top section of the



Chicago's Courthouse in 1850. This picture and others up to and including page 11, are redrawn from old prints of the Chicago Historical Society.

holder high in the structure, it indicated that all was well at the works and a plentiful supply was ready for the growing demands of the city. And when any unusual effort was necessary, they were close by.

The Infant and the Giant

Chicago's population in 1850 was 30,000 compared with over 3,600,000 today. To compare gas service in 1850 with today is to compare the first send-out of 15,000 cubic feet a night with this year's twenty-four-hour peak send-out of over 320,000,000 cubic feet.

South Clark Street in the 50's. Wooden sidewalks and planked streets on different levels—while Chicago was digging itself out of the mud.



The building on the right is the first gas plant in Chicago—only picture of it known to exist. The view is westward on Monroe Street from Market Street.



The Gaslight Era

...An American Saga

THE STORY OF GAS in Chicago is just as much the story of the vigorous city gas serves as it is the record of an industry. It is typically American, a chapter in the stirring history of the Middle West and the men who made it.

Gas service here developed from tiny beginnings. It was beset from time to time by adversities, some of which threatened its very existence. But, more often than not, what seemed to be a crisis was turned into an advantage instead—an opportunity for greater growth and greater service. As the second century of gas service in Chicago begins, Peoples Gas stands at the dawn of an era in which it will have the opportunity of serving more people in more ways than ever before.

First steps toward gas service were taken when five enterprising pioneer residents gathered on October 16, 1848, to draft a petition to the Illinois state legislature for authority to form a gas company that would furnish

reliable lighting. The legislature responded with a charter and from this was founded the Chicago Gas Light and Coke Company, which preceded Peoples Gas by a few years.

Demand Grows Fast

From almost the very beginning, anticipating future demand has been one of the biggest jobs in providing gas service. The mushrooming growth of Chicago in earlier years accented this problem; in more recent times, the development of numerous new uses for gas in home, business and industry further complicated it. A few days after the first turn-on back in 1850, a *Journal* editorial had this to say:

"The company, judging from the extent of the apparatus, have built for a future day."

That the supply of gas made available to the city is a matter of vital



Galena & Chicago Railroad Station (later the Chicago & North Western), at Canal and Kinzie Streets.



Lake and Wabash Streets in 1858, a retail, wholesale, and manufacturing center of early Chicago.



public interest in modern times as well, is indicated by the following headline which appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* March 29, 1948:

**GAS UTILITIES
GIVE CHICAGO
VAST ENERGY**

A second gas oven went into operation on October 6, 1850, raising production capacity to 22,000 cubic feet—all of which was needed within a few months. By 1855, mains had crossed the river to supply the north and west sides, and a holder was built with a capacity of 300,000 cubic feet. That year, when the population had grown to 80,000, a bill was signed by the Governor which brought into being The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company.

These various events added up to the beginning of the gaslight era which was to continue beyond the turn of the century. As recently as forty years ago Peoples Gas was proudly pointing to "400 candle power light for one cent an hour." The flame that lighted Chicago's homes and streets now cooks several millions of meals a day in homes and restaurants. Homes that keep foods safely stored in silent gas refrigerators and automatically heat water with gas run into the hundreds

of thousands. Basements have been changed into recreation rooms following the installation of modern gas furnaces or boilers.

Business and industry are served too, in thousands of different ways. Factories that once used gas to light hundreds of arc lamps now use the same fuel to run mammoth furnaces. One such furnace takes as much gas during an eight-hour shift as the daily demand of an average suburban town.

The Nation in the Fifties

It was in this decade that the first Pullman car, first derby hat, first camera, first telegraph line, first oil well and first Atlantic cable were produced. Sewing machines and washing machines were among the other inventions of the period. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and a Swedish "nightingale" named Jennie Lind thrilled thousands.

Chicago in the Fifties

Chicago's first theater was illuminated with gas. Theodore Thomas, later to become famous as a symphony conductor, was violinist in a small orchestra. McCormick was manufacturing 40 reapers a day. By the end of this decade eight railroads were operating in and out of the city, which was to become the world's greatest rail center.

Chicago shoreline in the late 50's, near where Michigan Avenue runs today. Note the railroad on piling out in the lake. The present right-of-way of the Illinois Central follows the same route.





He Kept the Gas Goin'

... Even Through the Great Fire

AS THE gaslight era began to wane in the nineties, memories of Chicago's greatest disaster—the Great Fire of 1871—were still in the minds of many of its citizens. It destroyed the original gas plant at Market and Monroe Streets but the Chicago Company's new North Station and the 22nd Street Works of Peoples Gas were spared. Both continued to operate.

Even in a crisis as great as the fire which destroyed a large part of the city, gas service was maintained in widespread areas. *Thus, there has been no complete interruption in gas service in Chicago in the entire first one hundred years.*

Employees who had retired on pensions used to drop in occasionally to tell of events of the Great Fire. They described how a second floor space in a Company building (at Market and Monroe Streets) was turned into a

women's and children's infirmary, even before the walls had cooled. North Station had long, low coal sheds which were used as shelters for north side refugees. The stories that pleased the old-timers, however, were the ones in which they played a personal part. "We kept the holders up"—meaning they had maintained a sufficient supply in the gas holders to keep service going.

In 1893, Chicago definitely took its place in world affairs. It was holding its glittering World's Columbian Exposition, which drew millions of visitors from all over the United States and from many foreign lands as well. It was then that the gaslight era was at its peak. Gas burners brilliantly illuminated the city's first great "World's Fair" as well as provided bright, white light for the city's streets, homes,

Home at northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street (in 1870) before the Great Fire.



Ruins at the same corner after the conflagration. The Peoples Gas Building stands there today.



stores and factories. Even then, however, great events were in the making and soon the nature of gas service was to be completely changed. Even at its peak, the gaslight era was drawing to a close.

The second half of the nineteenth century brought two important inventions to the gas business. Bunsen invented his famous burner in 1855. By 1875, the use of candles for lighting had ended in cities. Kerosene and gas had taken over. In 1885, Carl von Welsbach invented the gas mantle which made it possible for gas to provide a whiter, brighter light.



State Street entrance of the Palmer House, as rebuilt shortly after the Fire.



State Street shopping center in the late 60's. The growing city's streets still were muddy.



One of the horsecars on which many Chicagoans rode to work in 1870.

Courthouse Square and the streets and buildings surrounding it in the days before the Chicago Fire.



"Cookin' with Gas" Begins

*Around 1900,
Chicagoans by the thousands started
"Cookin' with Gas."*

THE GAY NINETIES began a great change for the gas business—a far-reaching one that would eventually open a bigger market for gas than had even been dreamed of up to this time.

About this time a new appliance was beginning to attract widespread attention here as elsewhere. It was the kitchen gas range, which had been in the course of development for some time. Made possible through an adaptation of the Bunsen burner principle, this stove brought new control and reliability to the art of cooking.

Pioneering a New Field

The volume of gas sales for cooking eventually became greater than the lighting business which went to electricity with the appearance of the new incandescent light bulb.

Although the gas range was "new fangled" to the public at the start, it was soon accepted with surprising rapidity by householders. From about 1898 on into the 1900's demonstrations of gas cooking were conducted on



ranges set up in vacant lots. People were invited to bring foods they wanted cooked, and see for themselves how much better and more easily meals could be cooked with gas.

Enterprise on a Wagon

One story of the times concerns a salesman who was even more enterprising. He did not wait for customers to come to him; instead, he loaded a gas range on a horse-drawn wagon and carried his message to people on street corners. He would drive his wagon under a street lamp, run a rubber hose from the lamp to the stove, and proceed to demonstrate gas cookery. Soon he was turning in orders for ranges as fast as they could be filled.

Figures printed in the Peoples Gas Annual Report for 1898 had begun to

The famous Rush Street Bridge looking northeast in the 60's. Some of the buildings in the background were warehouses for handling the lake and rail shipping of that time.



reflect the big change that was under way. They showed that the Company had sold 20,343 gas stoves in that year, an impressive total for the time. (Now, from 85,000 to 120,000 or more modern gas ranges are sold every year by dealers throughout the city. Each year large numbers of new and improved models are purchased to replace older types.) From 1900 on, the swing to gas for cooking was to show substantial increases year after year. Before the first World War the important change to the gas cooking period was all but completed.

Today Peoples Gas has more than 900,000 customers in the city. More families than ever are cooking with gas; hundreds of thousands of households use it also for automatic water heating, silent refrigeration, or space heating, or a combination of such uses. Commercial and industrial customers require gas for thousands of uses. These other uses have been made possible by the imagination and engineering skill of many experts ceaselessly working in research and testing laboratories.



Chicago Day, October 9, at the World's Fair of 1893, when paid admissions totalled over 700,000. Note dense throngs in this view of the Exposition.

So basic has gas service become in America that sayings (even slang) about it have become part of our language. A slogan introduced 30 years ago, "You can do it better with gas," remains a common expression today. Six years ago the entertainment world came out with the phrase, "Now you're cookin' with gas," as an expression of approval.

The gas meter was invented and put in use in 1834. The basic principle of its operation was so simple and dependable that its design and construction have been changed but little. It remains one of the truest measuring devices in use today.

*Now, more Chicagoans
than ever are
"Cookin' with Gas."*



13 Gas Companies Become One . . . Service Is Improved

GAS SERVICE in Chicago was not always provided, as now, by a single company regulated in the public interest. All the gas utilities in Chicago were brought under one management by a consolidation of ten different gas companies with Peoples Gas in 1897 and 1898, with the addition of two more in 1907.

A number of companies sprang up in the eighties and nineties and thereafter, in unrestrained competition. Some of the individual companies operated in the same territory. There was a good deal of wasteful duplication of facilities. No one of these separate systems had been installed with any idea that it would ultimately fit into a single system supplying all Chicago.

Peoples Gas engineers solved a real problem in the early part of this century—that of welding together many different and variously located plants, holders, and distribution systems. They



not merely linked all these facilities, but created a coordinated, efficient, city-wide system that would best serve all parts of Chicago.

Creating a single gas system in Chicago operated by a single company meant an end to costly and senseless duplication of mains and other facilities. In this way, the step was in the public interest.

At the same time, however, it created a monopoly. Whoever wanted gas service in the city had to buy it from the one company. But monopolies, as such, are contrary to the American idea of healthy competition in a free enterprise system. It was necessary to preserve the benefits of single-company operation in the public

The Gas Building shown below occupied the same site as the present home of The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company, which was completed in 1910.



Corner of State and Madison in the 90's—later to become known as "the world's busiest corner."



utility field and yet protect the public from unfair treatment.

The Illinois Commerce Commission, which was created by the Illinois Legislature in 1913, regulates public utilities within the state, including gas service in Chicago. It prescribes rates and standards of service, examines financing plans, and meets numerous other regulatory responsibilities.

As such, the Commission may be likened to an "umpire" balancing the rights and interests of customer, investor and company as evenly as possible in the over-all public interest.

The attitude of Peoples Gas in the matter of state regulation was recently re-stated by an official of the Company as follows: "The objective of the Commission and of the Company should always be the same—namely, to provide the conditions for a financially sound company able to render the best possible service at reasonable rates. We intend in the future, as in the past, to work with the Commission faithfully in achieving that objective."

Today There Is Competition—Lots of It!

TODAY PEOPLES GAS is a monopoly in the sense that it is the only company in Chicago selling gas, but it is one in that sense only. Actually, it has competition—and plenty of it! Competition with electricity for home refrigeration, cooking and water heating. Competition with coal and oil for home heating. Competition with oil, coal and electricity in hundreds of different industrial uses. If our service standards were relaxed, or our prices



Mid-Victorian gas-lit parlor in Chicago. Drawing follows the authentic details of a reconstructed room at the Chicago Historical Society.

moved substantially above other fuels, we would soon risk the loss of business.* Peoples Gas welcomes competition, for it is the life of trade. It keeps us on our toes. It is the stimulus that has made American industry the envy of the rest of the world.

*

Gas used for cooking costs the average family in Chicago a little over five cents a day. For families who use gas for cooking and automatic water heating, the average cost is only about 12 cents a day; while the addition of gas refrigeration to cooking and automatic water heating in the average home means only about 3 cents more a day.

The cost of gas for heating an average six room home in Chicago estimated as of January 5, 1950, is \$119, as compared with the cost of \$166 to heat the same home with the cheapest form of No. 3 oil, and with \$127 for the cheapest form of coal.



Gas, a Household Worker...

SOON AFTER the close of World War I, a decision was reached by Peoples Gas which was to broaden greatly the usefulness of gas wherever heat was required. The change from lighting to home cooking had begun more than twenty years before. Now it was decided to expand the use of gas beyond the home and to promote volume sales of gas as the best fuel for industrial and commercial use.

Here was another move so broad in scope that time and hard work were needed to achieve success. To develop the new market required research, education and sound selling to make sure each user's needs were served better than he expected.

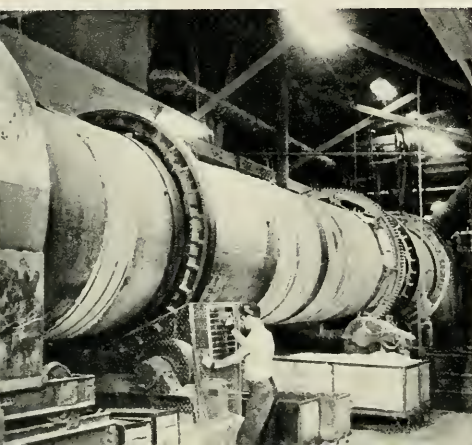
So, using the slogan, "You Can Do It Better with Gas"—which even now is a catch phrase embedded in everyday language—Peoples Gas sales engineers set out to convince hard-headed

executives and practical shop superintendents that gas offered important advantages which could improve products and increase profit. Other specialists concentrated on the hotel and restaurant field, bakeries and other commercial establishments to prove gas could do the job better there too.

As its success in one type of industry was demonstrated under actual operating conditions, the interest of other manufacturers was kindled. From a few uses back in the earlier twenties, gas as early as 1929 had become a giant in industry and commerce. But, even then, heavy duty utilizations undreamed of at that time lay ahead.

The step-up of the industrial tempo as the country entered the preparations-for-defense period in late 1939 and 1940 put a new premium on production efficiencies. When America

This 65-foot rotary kiln uses gas in the lowering of moisture content in mass materials used in the chemical industry.



Into this mammoth furnace, a building in itself, great metal tanks are moved on flat cars to be stress-relieved by gas heat.



Takes a Factory Job, Too



entered World War II, with all-out production immediately following, still more and more ways were found to make gas serve industry.

Today gas has more than 12,000 uses in Chicago industry and commerce. Fifty-eight per cent of all the gas consumed within the city goes for these purposes. Its uses range from mass production to the most exacting precision work—everything from providing heat for a vast outdoor stress relieving furnace large enough to hold a railroad flat car to burners used in the accurate shaping of tiny metal devices for straightening teeth.

Here are but a few of the uses of gas in Chicago industry and commerce:

Firing of decorated china, pottery, lamp bases, etc.

Providing fuel for all forms of heat treating of gears and hard-wearing parts

used in machinery, automobiles, airplane motors and agricultural implements.

Shaping precisely the glass tubes used in radio and television.

Annealing copper and brass in manufacture of housewares, auto parts and machinery.

Baking of cookies, cakes, bread and crackers in automatic ovens sometimes extending 275 feet.

Firing steam boilers in huge generating plants and in the packing industry.

Drying of inks on fast press runs and preventing static in printing operations.

Melting great masses of materials in the production of chemicals.

Smoking, curing and processing meats.

Supplying heat in small amounts for the intricate uses of medical laboratories and hospitals.

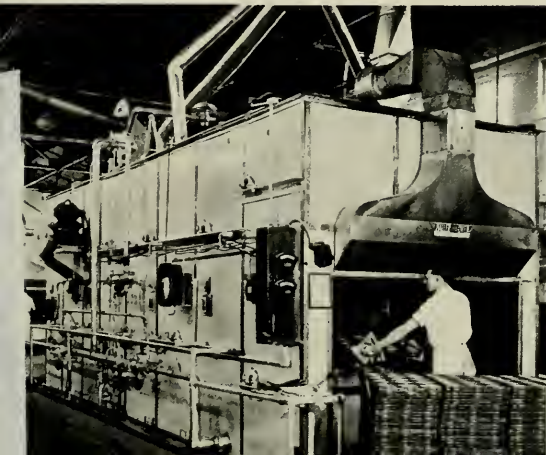
Heating drying ovens in dozens of industries.

Supplying closely controlled heat to Chicago's candy industry.

Furnishing the fuel for the variable cooking demands of hotels and restaurants, large and small.

Gleaming gas ovens such as these play a major part in turning out bread, pies and cakes in Chicago's large bakeries.

Executive chef at the Stevens Hotel checks the enormous quantities of beef roasted with gas in efficient modern stainless steel ovens.



A Big New Supply

... It's a "Natural"



THE GREAT industrial activity of the year 1929 found Peoples Gas facing a problem the reverse of that which had confronted it in previous periods. A dozen years earlier, for example, it had struggled to create a demand for all the gas it could produce. The job in 1929 was somehow to find a supply that would meet this increased demand.

Fuel from Texas

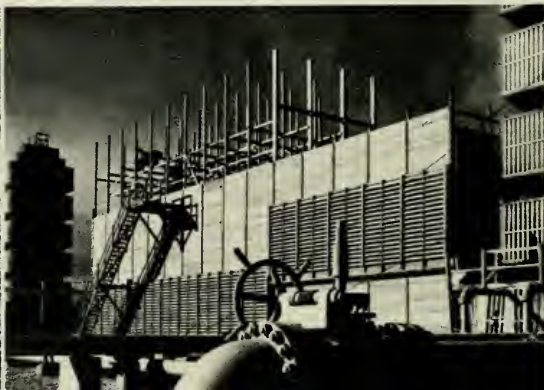
Natural gas, one of America's major resources, offered one of the most logical means of bringing supply up to demand. But it called for a pipeline to tap the great subterranean storehouse of energy in the Texas Panhandle, close to 1000 miles away. The pros and cons of such a pipeline had been examined and weighed by engineers and other technical experts for many months. When Peoples Gas decided to

pay a portion of the construction costs of this great energy transmission line, it embarked on one of the most ambitious public service projects ever undertaken for Chicago.

A Unique Undertaking

Other cities were already using natural gas, it is true, but nowhere was the undertaking of such magnitude and significance. This was to be the first long distance, high pressure steel pipeline extending all the way from the Southwest to a major northern metropolitan market of the size of Chicago. Peoples Gas provided its share of the \$75,000,000 in construction costs. To build the line required 209,000 tons of specially fabricated 24-inch diameter steel pipe (6500 freight car loads). It took the labor equivalent of 2500 men working every day for a year. The

Left—Traveling cranes lay large-diameter steel gas pipe that has first been coated and wrapped with corrosion-resisting material. Right—Construction in progress on a new station for conditioning and pumping gas.



-Across the plains and prairies of
states goes the natural gas pipeline.

pipeline had to be brought across 100 streams, including mighty rivers like the Mississippi and the Missouri. The right of way involved leases on 2600 separate tracts of farm land.

"Change-over" a Mammoth Job

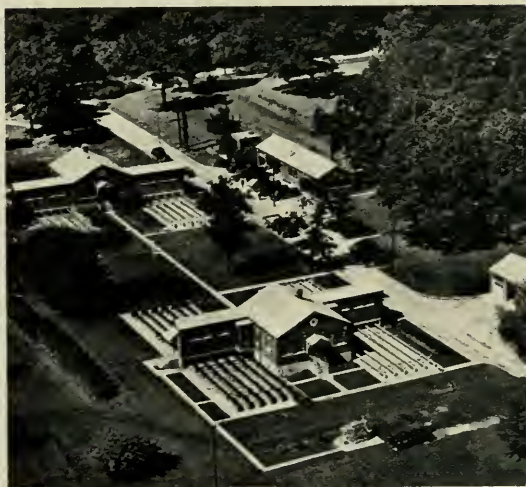
New buildings and other installations had to be provided before the new gas could be used in the Company's more than 3700 miles of distribution mains. These included facilities for blending natural gas with the manufactured gas in correct proportions. Another huge job was the efficient adjustment of the millions of appliances in use throughout the city.

The new gas entered the mains all over Chicago at 4 p.m. on October 16,

Chicago is served with a mixed gas—a blend of natural gas and manufactured coke oven and water gas. Peoples Gas engineers developed such a mixed gas because it produces a flame applicable to the greatest number of uses. It also permits maximum use both of natural gas and manufactured gas facilities, which is in the public interest.

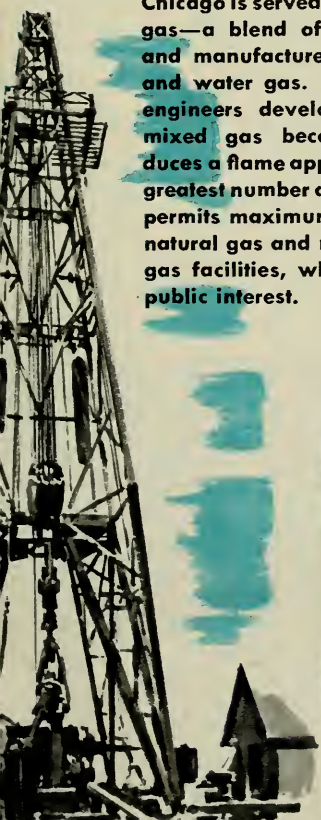
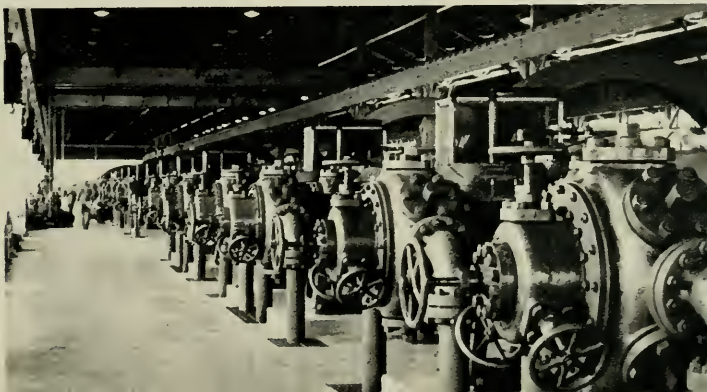
1931, and the change-over was made with a minimum of inconvenience to hundreds of thousands of customers.

Meanwhile, the general business depression had settled down over the land, and the Company was faced with the challenge of finding a market for the huge quantities of gas it had contracted to receive daily. That the market was found is another illustration of the resourcefulness of the gas utility industry in particular and American business in general.



Station at northern end of pipeline (near Joliet) where gas is metered and delivered for distribution in Chicago area.

Interior of a pumping station. Powered by gas engines, seventeen compressors pump the fuel on its way to the Chicago market.



Gas and More Gas

—the Cry of the 40's



THE ABUNDANCE of natural gas that was first brought to Chicago from Texas in 1931 had been expected to prove a great boon in meeting the community's needs. But the great depression then held the entire country in its grip. The big new supply temporarily became an *over-supply*.

But, all that seems part of the distant past now. As general conditions improved in the mid-thirties, factories reopened and the thousands of Chicago families who had felt the effects of the depression re-won their accustomed standards of living.

Many installed gas for heating their homes, which marked the opening of another mass market for Peoples Gas service. Company billboards blanketed the city showing the "head of the house" comfortably established in his easy chair and announcing to the world in letters three feet high: "NO WINTER WORRIES FOR ME—

I GOT GAS HEAT." The Company received a few letters objecting to the grammar in the message, but it was typical of the expressions Mr. Chicago was using in voicing relief over his escape from furnace-tending.

Families installing gas heat frequently converted their basements to recreation rooms, which further encouraged their neighbors to join the swing. By 1940 gas for space heating was entrenched in Chicago.

Large numbers of families also were turning to an intriguing gas appliance that already had received wide acceptance in other parts of the country—a *silent* gas refrigerator, which used the heat of a small *gas flame* to produce constant *cold*.

In addition, as the operating efficiency of automatic gas water heaters

The clean blue gas flame used in the modern gas range makes baking and all other cooking easy for Mrs. Chicago.

Gas-heated water . . . plenty of it ready at all times . . . makes dishwashing, housecleaning and laundering easier by far.



was further improved, more and more Chicago families found that they could have constant hot water service at the turn of a faucet at surprisingly low cost. What's more, they didn't have to run to and from the basement to turn the heater on and off. The automatic kind did that by itself.

So, with the coming of the forties, gas was now helping with "the four big jobs" of housekeeping—cooking; heating water for dishes, cleaning and bathing; refrigerating foods and freezing ice cubes; and heating the house.

Meantime, as told elsewhere in this booklet, the industrial boom preceding and continuing through World War II was on, and gas had its work cut out for it there too.

All of this soon added up to the fact that gas, which was in an over-abundance in the preceding decade, was now in short supply. "Gas—and more gas," was the cry of the forties, a cry which is heard even more persistently now that we are in the fifties.

Here is how Chicago now uses gas in the home:

For cooking 985,000 families
For automatic water
heating 165,000 families

Gas refrigeration . . . silent and with no moving parts in the freezing system of the refrigerator . . . has shown a great gain in public acceptance.

For refrigeration 117,000 families
For home heating 69,000 families*

*78,000 Chicago families are on the waiting list for gas heat because the demand is greater than the supply. It has been necessary since 1946 to limit the attachment of additional space heating customers in order to protect the vast public already dependent upon gas supply.

Most people know that it takes a large sum of money to provide gas service in a large city, but few realize the actual amount. Peoples Gas has more than \$150,000,000 invested in plant and property alone—just a portion of what is needed to run the business. This figure does not include additional millions invested by affiliated companies in pipeline facilities used primarily to bring gas to Chicago.

Few groups of people come as close to perfection as does our force of 180 meter readers, who in the first six months of 1950 had a record of 99.95 per cent accuracy. Our champion meter reader, William Morgan, who hasn't made an error in sixteen years, received fan mail from throughout the Middle West when his record was mentioned on an NBC radio broadcast. The Company receives many complimentary letters from customers concerning the courtesy of these men.

Setting temperature at the touch of a finger. The Chicago families using efficient, convenient gas heat now total 69,000.





Dual 1000-Mile Pipeline System Can't Meet the Demand

Headline in Chicago Daily Sun-Times of June 15, 1950.

AS WE ALL REMEMBER, that "post-war slump" people were talking about at the end of World War II somehow failed to arrive.

Factories remained busy; families had money to buy many things they had long wanted.

What all this meant to Peoples Gas was that the demand for service—already at a peak—remained where it was; oil and coal prices soared while gas heating rates remained unchanged. New families by the thousands were added to the waiting list for gas heat.

More Natural Gas

A struggle to obtain scarce materials, particularly steel pipe, was finally won and a second natural gas line was completed in 1949—paralleling the first from the Texas Panhandle and

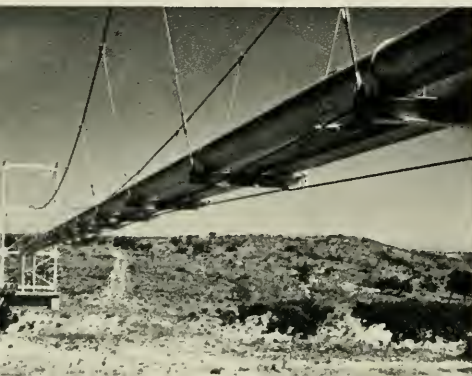
western Oklahoma fields, and creating a dual system with a daily capacity of more than 500 million cubic feet, most of it delivered to the Chicago area.

Just prior to the completion of this second line, Peoples Gas, late in 1948, acquired all the stock of the two pipeline companies which had been gathering and transmitting natural gas to it since 1931, and in which it had had a minority interest during that time.* Peoples Gas thus obtained control over its source of supply and of the fully integrated physical system, which starts hundreds of feet below the earth's surface in the gas fields of the

*These companies are Texoma Natural Gas Company, the producing company in the Texas Panhandle field, and Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America, which operates the dual high pressure pipeline system to the Chicago area.

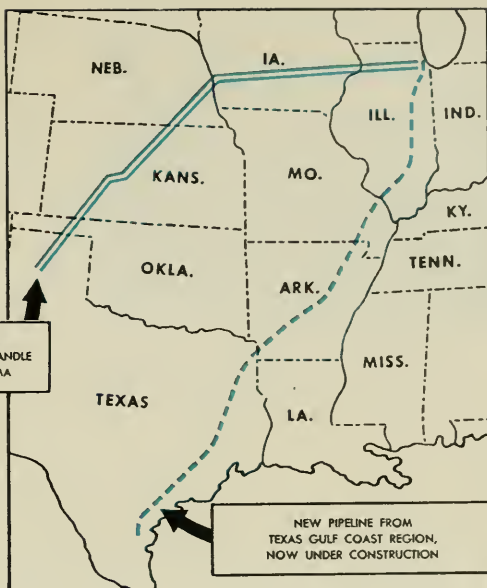
The great natural gas pipeline is carried across a river by a suspension bridge. Frequently, however, the pipelines are buried in the bed of a stream.

"Blowing" a natural gas well to clear it of liquids and other matter so that the passage of the gas will be unobstructed.



We're Building a Third Pipeline, 1330 Miles Long

PRESENT DUAL PIPELINE
SYSTEM FROM TEXAS PANHANDLE
AND WESTERN OKLAHOMA



NEW PIPELINE FROM
TEXAS GULF COAST REGION,
NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Southwest 1000 miles away, and ends at the appliances of the hundreds of thousands of Chicago customers.

Peoples Gas, reaching out across five states to insure a supply for its Chicago market, thus became the major company in a 1000-mile dual pipeline system supplying customer companies in an extended area of the Middle West having a population of 6,300,000.

But, of more importance to Chicago, acquisition of the pipeline companies by this operating utility helped speed plans for construction of a third pipeline, this one to run from the Gulf Coast area of Texas, south of Houston, a distance of 1330 miles. Necessary approval to build the line was obtained by a newly formed Peoples Gas affiliate, Texas Illinois Natural Gas Pipe-

line Company in June, 1950, from the Federal Power Commission.

As these words are written, construction of the new line is under way. Completion is scheduled for late fall of 1951. Initial capacity of the line will be 305 million cubic feet daily, 80% of which will come to the Chicago area. Ultimately, the capacity is expected to be increased by acquisition of new gas reserves and addition of compressor stations for pumping the gas, to 518 million cubic feet daily—which will be more than equal to the total capacity of the present dual system from the Texas Panhandle and western Oklahoma.

In laying the third pipeline, experience of affiliated company engineers is playing an all-important part. The new line will follow a course of its own, over new terrain, crossing swamps, rivers, rock-studded hills and deep valleys. Foul weather and all the obstacles common to this work will be surmounted by the construction crews.

A pipeline being laid along the right-of-way. Just a partial indication of the variety of country and soil conditions encountered.





A rowboat is used to get around inside the water tank of a gas holder when an inspection is in order to make sure that everything is structurally right.

WHAT FACILITIES are required to provide gas service? A vast network of mains beneath almost every Chicago street. Huge coke ovens and water gas manufacturing works. Hundreds of miles of natural gas pipeline stretching all the way to Texas and Oklahoma. These are among the first to come to mind.

The following properties of the Company and its affiliates are presently used in bringing natural gas to Chicago, in manufacturing gas here, in mixing the gases and distributing the blend of natural and manufactured

Rowboats to Airplanes...

gas to the more than 900,000 customers in Chicago:

132,000 acres of leaseholds in the Texas Panhandle gas field. These holdings supply 50 per cent of the gas transmitted by Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America.

230 producing natural gas wells

2600 miles of field gathering lines and high pressure transmission mains

2 gasoline extraction plants

12 field and main line compressor stations

15 production and distribution stations

17 gas storage holders

3700 miles of distribution gas mains

18,681,000 feet of service pipe

When the third natural gas pipeline from the Texas Gulf Coast region to the Chicago area is completed, certain of the above figures will, of course, be greatly increased.

Such facilities are basic, but a surprising variety of additional equip-



Left—Aerial view of the Company's huge Crawford Station—its principal gas manufacturing plant.

Below—Partial view of the Division Street Station, one of fifteen production or distribution stations.



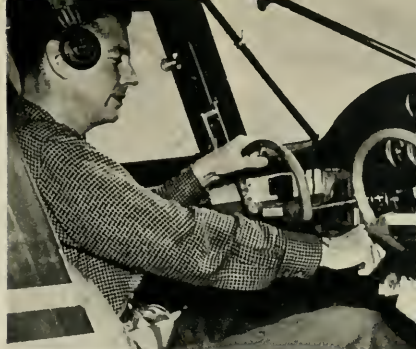
It's All in a Day's Work

ment is needed too—things that the public would scarcely associate with gas service. Even rowboats and air-planes play a part.

Rowboats are used in—of all places—the interior of the “water-type” gas holder. When gas is displaced by air for internal inspection, a workman slides through a hatch into the interior of the holder. Entering a small rowboat tied inside, he rows around the interior circumference of the holder examining the structure.

Airplanes are used both for inspecting and photographing rights-of-way for new cross-country natural gas pipelines and for patrolling the pipelines to discover possible damage from erosion or evidence of leaks.

A major project in itself is a soil conservation program carried on by Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America, an affiliate of Peoples Gas, in co-operation with the U. S. Soil Conservation Service and farmers along the pipeline right-of-way, which extends across five states. Bulldozers, plows



Airplanes are used over the natural gas pipelines—selecting right-of-way and patrolling completed lines.

and seeders play a part in this job. Initiated twenty years ago, the program protects the pipeline from damage. Erosion caused by weather and poor farming practices has to be checked. Thus, working in the interests of good gas service, the pipeline company in effect goes into “partnership” with the farmer in such work as contour plowing and planting “cover” crops—and both the farmer and gas service benefit.

Vast sources of natural energy and tremendous man-made facilities are combined to make possible the miracle of modern gas service. That such service—available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—is taken for granted by the people of Chicago, is gratifying to Peoples Gas because it indicates public confidence.

The composite photograph below shows some of the facilities required to provide gas service to a metropolis the size of Chicago. The picture is by no means complete—and it should be remembered that many of the Company's properties are below ground.



"It Must Be a Good Place to Work"

ONE CAN well understand that we are pleased when a metropolitan newspaper speaks of Peoples Gas as it did in the quotation reproduced on this page. Now, 1086 of its 4567 employees have been with the Company over 25 years.

Length of service in many cases runs far beyond the quarter-century mark. Seventeen employees have more than 45 years of service, while 233 have less than 45 but more than 35 years.

There are 979 who have been with the Company more than fifteen years but less than 25. Those with ten years or more of service number 2419—*more than half* of the total employed.

The 1086 employees with twenty-five years or more are members of the Peoples Gas Quarter Century Club, which meets annually to welcome new members to its ranks.

Mutual respect between employee and employer constitutes the cornerstone upon which Peoples Gas has built its employee relations program. Some of the policies and practices included in the program are:

In all, 976 employees out of 4,331 have been with the big Chicago utility 25 years or more.

. . . It must be a good place to work.

—The Chicago Daily News, November 26, 1948

- As a matter of general policy promotions are made, whenever possible, from within the ranks.
- A retirement annuity program has been in effect since 1912 and a group life insurance program since the early twenties.
- The Company pays the entire cost of the retirement annuity program.
- The Company pays 35 per cent of the cost of a broad hospitalization and surgical benefit plan for employees and their dependents.
- After fifteen years service, employees are given three weeks vacation with pay, four weeks with pay after 25 years.
- The doors are open to all employees at all levels.

Peoples Gas has always recognized that the well-being, loyalty and efficiency of employees are indispensable in maintaining the high standards of service which the public has a right to expect.

One of the gatherings after-hours in the Employees' Recreation Room in the Peoples Gas Building.



Scene at a basket picnic held by the Peoples Gas Club, of which all employees are members.



14,700 People Own Peoples Gas

MORE THAN 14,700 stockholders, living in all of the forty-eight states and in several foreign countries, are the owners of The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company and the vast facilities with which it serves almost one million gas consumers in Chicago.

Of them, 7139 live in Chicago. The total living in Illinois, including those in Chicago, is 9412.

Almost all walks of life are represented—the baker, the dentist, the financier, the physician, the school teacher, the housewife, to list only a few.

Most of them own a relatively small number of shares, 6674 owning ten shares or less. Only 1994 own 100 shares or more.

Additional thousands besides stockholders have indirect but real financial interests in Peoples Gas, including shareholders in investment trusts owning Peoples Gas stock and holders of insurance policies in insurance companies owning bonds of Peoples Gas.

The confidence of the investor is essential for Peoples Gas credit. Without credit—the ability to raise capital—Peoples Gas could neither satisfy its obligations to serve the public nor maintain good jobs for its employees.

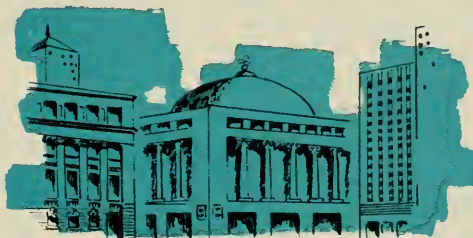
OUR INVESTORS



Peoples Gas has more than 14,700 stockholders located in all states of the Union and a number of foreign countries.

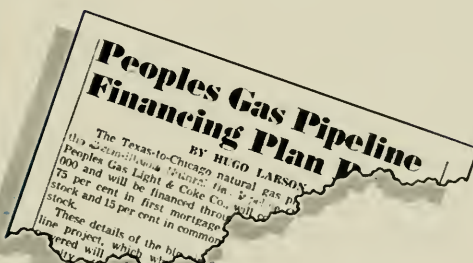


The stockholders, both individual and institutional, are a cross section of American life. They include the doctor, the housewife, the laborer, the banker and the investment trust.



Nine life insurance companies own the \$55,500,000 principal amount of Peoples Gas bonds.

The Chicago Herald-American, April 6, 1950.



... You give us better service with less ostentation than anyone else I know . . .

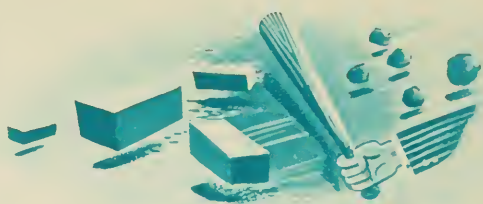
... I was in the middle of the street and your truck came to a dead stop to protect me from the traffic . . .

... and your switch-board operators are included in the complement . . .

... I'm glad to be your customer--your rates are reasonable and the service can't be beat.

... The young man did a fine job . . . I baked a sponge cake with wonderful results...

Peoples Gas service man explaining operation of new range in customer's home.



Brickbats . . .

EVERYBODY worth his salt likes to do his job well. In business, this is particularly true. The corner delicatessen and the large company are as one in that both must please as many of their customers as possible.

What this amounts to is getting along with people by supplying them in a friendly way, at a fair price, with what they want, when they want it.

We of Peoples Gas have some good things said about us—and we catch some complaints too. We take pride in the fact that the complaints represent a very, very small minority of the expressions we receive from the public.

We are deeply concerned because more than 78,000 families are on a "waiting list" for gas heat. Not only because it is clean, convenient and fully automatic but also because it is the cheapest way to heat in Chicago, so many families want it that we cannot meet the demand. This is the case even though the capacity of the pipeline system between Chicago and the Texas Panhandle and Oklahoma has been doubled. Even with completion of the third pipeline between the Gulf Coast area of Texas and Chicago, construction of which is now under way, we may still be unable to supply all who want gas heat.

The building of the third pipeline is not the end of our efforts to solve the supply problem.



and Bouquets



Two other extraordinary efforts to solve the problem are now in progress:

1. Our engineers, working with geologists, are looking for empty gas and oil wells near the pipelines' terminals. Such wells could be sealed up as natural storage areas into which huge quantities of natural gas could be pumped during the low demand periods in summer to provide a reserve against peak demands in winter.
2. A Peoples Gas research group also is experimenting with the idea of mining limestone in some suitable location, so that a huge artificial underground storage area would be created. Such an area would serve if no natural area becomes available. On the scale which would be required, however, the magnitude of such an undertaking almost defies the imagination. For the present, such a project must be considered as entirely in the exploratory stage.

Both the search for a huge natural storage area and the experiments with a vast artificial one are, however, evidence of the untiring efforts of our engineering and research men to supply all Chicago with as much gas as it wants whenever it wants it.

And, if neither of these two plans proves out, the public can rest assured that these men will be—in the true “gas house gang” tradition—working on still other ways to find the answer.

GAS UTILITIES GIVE CHICAGO VAST ENERGY

From the Chicago Tribune
of March 29, 1948.

... and this man put
the stove in fine work-
ing condition . . .

Enclosed check
for \$1.23 which I am
paying under protest.
For the past 9 years my
bill has been running
between 63¢ and 79¢.
It should be no more
than minimum 60¢ . . .

... Your service man
is a perfect gentle-
man--courteous and
gracious . . .

Questions about service are answered
promptly and courteously when customers
come in, write or phone.





Need Recipes?



Our Home Service Has 15,000

FEW INDEED are the housewives who have not passed some of their favorite recipes on to neighbors and friends. Our Home Service Department carries this tradition even further by giving out to Chicago homemakers on request thousands and thousands of recipes each year. It has a basic file of 15,000 recipes on which to draw, covering practically all American dishes and many from foreign lands as well.

A call to "Martha Holmes," (the business title of our Home Service Director) WA bash 2-6000, makes available to Chicago women almost any information on cookery they desire.

Planning, preparing and serving nourishing meals is one of the most important "musts" in the family's well-being. It is because Peoples Gas sup-

plies the heat which cooks the meals of almost every Chicago family that it maintains its Home Service Department as an added public service.

The department was founded back in 1922 and is one of the pioneers in the field.

Tens of thousands of women have attended Peoples Gas cooking schools conducted by Martha Holmes and her staff of home economists. As many as 4500 women have attended single sessions of large Peoples Gas cooking schools presented at neighborhood theaters.

The welcome mat is always out during regular business hours for Mrs. Chicago at Peoples Gas Home Service Headquarters, 122 South Michigan Avenue.

Portion of a typical audience at a Peoples Gas Home Service Cooking School held in a neighborhood theater.





THE SECOND 100 YEARS

...Today's Plans for the Future

GAS SERVICE has come a vast distance in its first hundred years in Chicago from a tiny lighting business to a great service reaching into practically all of Chicago's hundreds of thousands of homes, and into thousands of business houses and industries as well.

This progress in the first century and the devotion to duty of past generations of gas workers, which made it possible, provide an inspiration as we begin the second hundred years.

Truly, the era in which Peoples Gas will have its greatest opportunity for public service is just now beginning. More people are finding gas service an essential of modern life in more ways than ever before.

On the occasion of the centennial of gas service in Chicago, we re-dedicate

ourselves to the task—and the privilege—of serving the Chicago public.

We will continue to devote our energies to the immediate task of increasing the supply here to the end that everybody can have all the gas service he wants whenever he wants it. We will continue to maintain and improve present high standards of service.

It is said that "the first hundred years are the hardest." Whether this will prove to be true during the second century of gas service in Chicago would require prophetic vision beyond mortal power. During the first century gas service spectacularly developed and served the public by uses undreamed of one hundred years ago. The same development could happen in the second century also.

THE PEOPLES GAS LIGHT AND COKE COMPANY

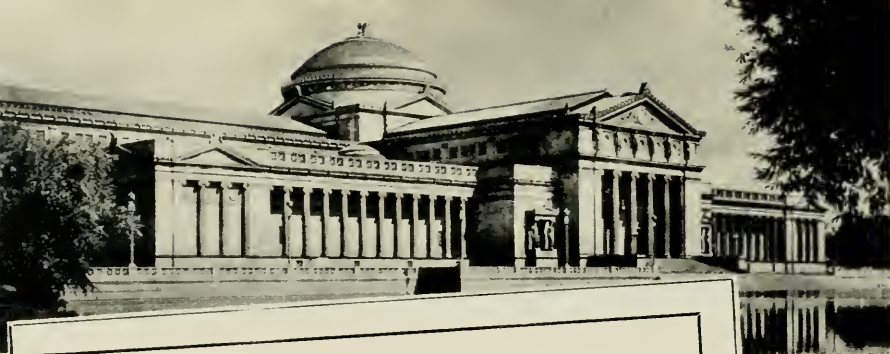
Downtown Office—122 South Michigan Avenue

WAbash 2-6000

Neighborhood Offices

846 WEST 63RD STREET
4829 SOUTH ASHLAND AVENUE
45 EAST PERSHING ROAD
11031 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE

3315 NORTH MARSHFIELD AVENUE
1520 NORTH MILWAUKEE AVENUE
1608 NORTH LARRABEE STREET
4839 WEST IRVING PARK ROAD



You Are Invited

TO VISIT THE NEW GAS EXHIBIT AT
THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY
LAKE FRONT AT 57TH STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

IN CELEBRATION of Chicago's Gas Centennial the Company has presented to the people of Chicago a permanent exhibit that tells the *STORY OF FLAME GAS*. Designed and built in cooperation with the Museum of Science and Industry, it presents a complete story of gas production, transmission and utilization, which is interesting to visitors of all ages.

Admission to the Museum is free, and it is open every day of the year except Christmas Day. Every facility is in the building including grill and lunch rooms. Chicago families will want to see and enjoy the Gas Exhibit and many other wonderful operating exhibits covering eight acres of floor space.

The Story of Flame Gas begins with

A general view of the exhibit showing the *STORY OF FLAME GAS*. In modern color, lighting and design, it tells the story of gas from its source to the thousands of uses in home and industry.



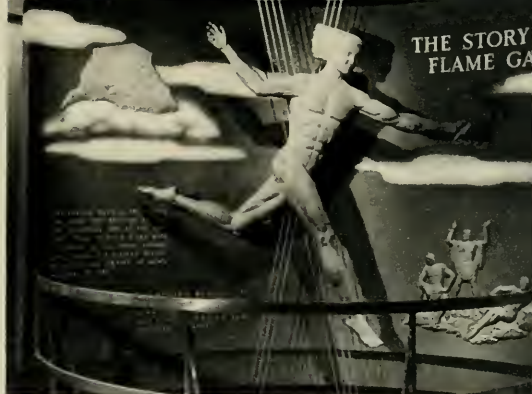
its discovery and early history. Some of the individual features are equipped with push-button devices enabling the visitor to see many interesting subjects demonstrated in actual operation. The early scientists and engineers who developed and put gas fuel to work are pictured in a portion of the space. Every basic phase, from the natural gas sources deep in the heart of Texas to the delivery and use of the clean blue flame, is shown. Of distinct interest to both young and old is the scale model showing the complete system of supply—the natural gas pipeline, the different processes of gas production and the distribution system which criss-crosses Chicago beneath its streets.

The Museum of Science and Industry joins with Peoples Gas in inviting all Chicago and visitors from far and near to see this newest exhibit at the Museum, Lake Front at 57th Street.

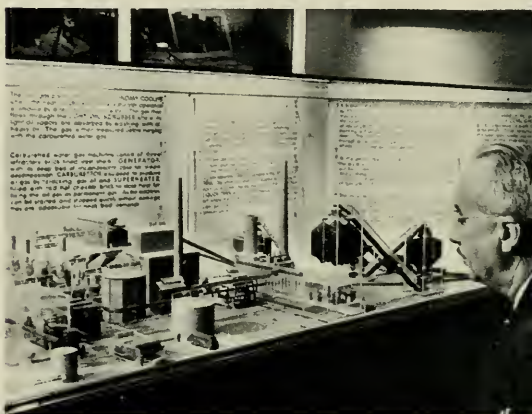
The exhibit took fourteen months to produce, from early planning to final installation. The first six months required the skills and experience of designers, architects and artists. Consultation with engineers was continual and varied. Skilled artisans were called upon for general construction work and the various operating features. Details were carefully developed so that the completed whole would present a true picture of the Story of Flame Gas.

PEOPLES GAS DESIGN

The exhibit was designed and executed by Peoples Gas Display Department, which also directs the activities of the Home Planning Bureau. The photo shows the headquarters of this service in the Peoples Gas Building. Here, suggestions and advice on kitchen planning are given to the public.



Prominently displayed is a large mahogany carving of Prometheus, first "Keeper of the Flame." Mythological Prometheus is the symbol of fire as the oldest servant of man. According to legend, he supplied mankind with fire taken from Mount Olympus.



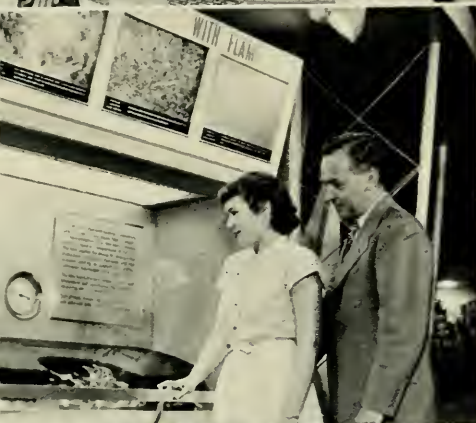
A center of attraction is the three-dimensional pictorama of Chicago's integrated system of gas supply. Schematic models in vari-colored plastics take the visitor from the gas fields of Texas, through the various gas production systems and the final transmission of gas to homes, shops and factories.





Museum Exhibit Features

The newest type gas holder ("tank" to the layman) is exhibited in a cut-away model operated by the Museum visitor. In holders of this design, millions of cubic feet of gas are confined beneath a moving plate similar to a piston.



A push-button activates a steel-treating cycle. A gas burner, similar to thousands used in industry, heats a strip of metal to a cherry red. It moves into a water spray, which hardens it by quenching. It then moves through another burner where a heat application of shorter duration anneals it.



A gas meter is put into operation. Here one may see how this simple but accurate measuring device operates. The outer case is made of transparent plastic so that the bellows and mechanism are seen measuring the gas as it flows through.



A gas exhibit would be incomplete without a modern kitchen. Here, in advanced styling and color, is a smart little kitchen with basic planning and equipment combined to provide cooking comfort and convenience.

Plant workers of an early day (see inside front cover) established "the gas house gang" tradition for devotion to duty. Today, hundreds of skills exercised by several thousand men and women are the backbone of Chicago's gas service. A few of "the gas house gang of 1950" are shown at work on the right.



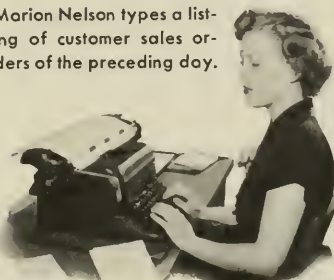
Gas House Gang ...1950

(See Inside Front Cover)

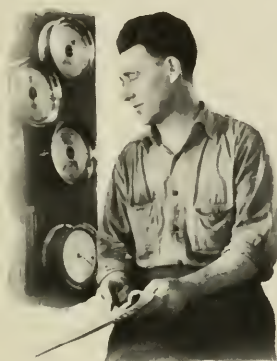


Special Service Man John Williams checks the trays in a gas dryer before adjusting the burner.

Marion Nelson types a listing of customer sales orders of the preceding day.



William Trahey sits at one of the 54 telephone desks and handles customer orders with courtesy and dispatch.

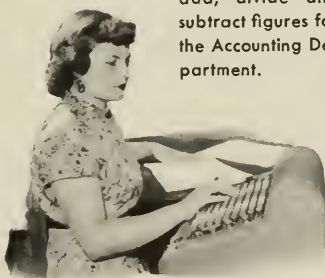


Close watch on the dials is kept by John Maloney at the Division Street Station.

Roger McKnight sets I-beam in purifier box at the big Crawford plant.



The flying fingers of Alma Morgan add, divide and subtract figures for the Accounting Department.



John King adjusts valves on a water gas machine. John is a gas maker.



Daniel Kilgallon uses a special jack to push a service pipe into position.

Keen eyes and steady wrists help Francis Kucera on the job as crane engineman.





This flame design

typifies the clean, efficient

and highly controllable energy

of the gas flame.





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

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100 YEARS OF GAS SERVICE IN CHICAGO, 185



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